

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, PCAT, UR, US
SUBJ: REPORTING CABLE: HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING, JULY 24, 1978

IN ATTENDANCE, US: GELB, BLECHMAN, MATHEWS, LYONS,
MUROMCEW. USSR: MENDELEVICH, GALKIN, YEREMICHEV, KOZYREV,
INTERPRETER.

1. MENDELEVICH OPENED THE MEETING WITH THE QUESTION OF
HOW TO DEAL WITH OTHER SUPPLIERS. HE STATED THAT THE
SOVIET SIDE HAD NO CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS, THAT OF COURSE WE
SHOULD "INFORM" OUR ALLIES, BUT THAT WE HAD TO GO BEYOND
THIS. HE ENUMERATED SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES, BUT MADE NO
SPECIFIC PROPOSAL, SUGGESTING INSTEAD THAT THE TWO SIDES
EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT THROUGH REGULAR BILATERAL
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT ROUND,
WHEN IT WOULD BE "OPERATIVE" I.E., SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED.

2. GELB REITERATED THE US VIEW THAT EVENTUALLY OTHER
SUPPLIERS NEEDED TO BECOME INVOLVED IF RESTRAINT WERE TO
BECOME EFFECTIVE, BUT THAT THE US AND SOVIET UNION--AS
THE TWO DOMINANT SUPPLIERS--MUST GO FIRST. GELB
STATED THAT US ALLIES HAVE SAID THAT THE US AND USSR
MUST MAKE A BEGINNING, ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK, AND
DEMONSTRATE A CAPACITY TO AGREE ON CONCRETE ACTIONS.

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GELB THEN ASKED SIX QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY SOVIET VIEWS
ON THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER SUPPLIERS.

3. IN HIS RESPONSE, MENDELEVICH ESSENTIALLY REPEATED
HIS OPENING STATEMENT CALLING AGAIN FOR BILATERAL
CONSULTATIONS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND COMPLETE
DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT ROUND. OF INTEREST, IN ORDER

TO DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING OTHER SUPPLIERS, HE CHARGED THAT THE US WAS PLAYING A "CHINA CARD" BY ENCOURAGING ITS ALLIES TO SELL ARMS TO CHINA. GELB STATED THAT US ALLIES ARE SOVEREIGN COUNTRIES THAT DISCUSS TRADE, INCLUDING ARMS SALES, WITH OTHER NATIONS WITHOUT NECESSARILY CONSULTING WITH THE US, AND THAT THE PRC IS ALSO AN INDEPENDENT ACTOR WHICH HAS NO INTEREST IN BECOMING DEPENDENT ON THE WEST FOR ARMS. THE US HAS OBVIOUS REASONS FOR IMPROVING ITS RELATIONS WITH CHINA, AND IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE USSR CONSTANTLY INTERPRETED OUR ACTIONS AS BEING NEGATIVELY DIRECTED AT THEM.

4. MENDELEVICH THEN TURNED TO THE SOVIET "NEIGHBORS PROPOSAL." HE SAID THAT THE "HURRIED" US REJECTION PUZZLED THE SOVIETS AND REPEATED NOW FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS FOR THE PROPOSAL WITHOUT NOTABLE CHANGES IN TONE OR SUBSTANCE. CURIOUSLY, WITH GREAT EMPHASIS AT THE END, HE NOTED THAT THIS PROPOSAL SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS RAISING ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE 1962 US-SOVIET AGREEMENT THAT CONCLUDED THE CUBAN CRISIS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE WORLD WAS CHANGING, AND WOULD CONTINUE TO CHANGE.

5. IN RESPONSE, GELB STATED THAT HE WOULD REPORT MENDELEVICH'S REMARKS, BUT THAT THE US REJECTED THE PROPOSAL AND THE REJECTION REMAINS. GELB THEN DEPRECATED
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"SERIOUSNESS" OF THE PROPOSAL, IN THE CONTEXT OF EXPLAINING THE US REJECTION; EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON THE PROPOSAL'S ONE-SIDEDNESS AND INCONSISTENCY WITH THE REGIONAL APPROACH, THE LATTER BEING SINE QUA NON FOR EFFECTIVE RESTRAINT. HE SUGGESTED THAT IN PLACE OF A NEIGHBORS' PROPOSAL THE SOVIETS WERE FREE TO RAISE REGIONS AND SUB-REGIONS, AND THE US SIDE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THEM. HE PLACED PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN REGIONS.

6. MENDELEVICH THEN ASKED WHAT THE US SIDE WOULD THINK IF IN THE FUTURE THE SOVIETS MADE "CONCRETE PROPOSALS" FOR (A) WESTERN ASIA, SOUTH FROM THE CAUCASUS AND THE CASPIAN SEA; AND (B) EASTERN ASIA, TO THE SOUTH FROM SIBERIA AND MONGOLIA. HE NOTED HE WAS NOT RAISING THEM NOW, JUST REFLECTING ON PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

7. GELB REITERATED THAT HIS DISCUSSION OF SOVIET "NEIGHBORS PROPOSAL" WAS STRICTLY IN THE CONTEXT OF EXPLAINING THE US REJECTION. HE STATED HE HAD NO IMMEDIATE REACTION TO MENDELEVICH'S "IDEAS" ABOUT REGIONS AND WOULD REFER THEM TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

8. MENDELEVICH REITERATED THAT HE WAS NOT PROPOSING THESE REGIONS, JUST DISCUSSING SOME IDEAS.

9. GELB GAVE MENDELEVICH A LIST OF QUESTIONS ABOUT MILITARY/TECHNICAL CRITERIA TO WHICH THE SOVIET SIDE PREVIOUSLY HAD NOT RESPONDED. HE URGED MENDELEVICH TO DISCUSS THEM AT THE NEXT PLENARY.

10. GELB THEN MET WITH MENDELEVICH ALONE TO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVEING RAPID AND CONCRETE PROGRESS IN CAT, BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE SOLID SOVIET COOPERATION IN THE POLICY REVIEWS THAT WERE TO COME. MENDELEVICH RESPONDED: (1) CONSIDERING THESE TALKS
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BEGAN ONLY LAST MAY, AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUBJECT, REMARKABLE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE; AND (2) THE PEOPLE BACK IN MOSCOW WERE SO SUSPICIOUS OF THE US NOW-ADAYS THAT CONCRETE REGIONAL STEPS ARE NOT POSSIBLE FOR THIS ROUND. GELB SAID US ALSO SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET BEHAVIOR, BUT WE ARE DISAPPOINTED NONETHELESS THAT WE CANNOT EXPECT CONCRETE PROGRESS THIS ROUND.
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